GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3387
ANSWERED ON:22.03.2017
Quality of Food
Anwar Shri Tariq

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the manner in which the railway passengers are likely to be benefited in terms of quality of food due to launching of meals on wheels catering policy;

(b) whether this policy is proposed to be implemented in all the trains and if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the base kitchen arrangements in the trains are smoothly functioning in all the trains and if so, the details thereof;

(d) the time by which the facility of base kitchen is likely to be provided in the trains that do not have such facility at present; and

(e) the reasons for charging high prices for catering items from railway passengers and whether the Government proposes to check it and if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(SHRI RAJEN GOHAIN)

(a) & (b): There is no policy named 'Meals on Wheels Catering Policy'. However, station based E-catering service on Indian Railways is provided by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC). IRCTC has tied up with renowned, reputed and established brands in the field of catering services so that the passengers can order good quality and hygienic food of their choice at market driven prices. In Rail Budget 2016-17, extension of station based e-catering service to all 408 'A1' and 'A' category stations through IRCTC has been announced. At present, E-catering service is available at 357 stations. Passengers travelling from these stations are able to access E-Catering facilities for all trains having stoppage at these stations. IRCTC is facilitating booking of meals through a specified phone number/ website / SMS / Mobile Apps etc. Passengers having mobile number are able to book meals under this scheme.

(c) & (d): Yes, Madam. At present, there are 359 trains running with pantry car. Further, attachment of pantry car to any train depends upon order of priority with respect to category of train viz. Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto/Mail/Express trains etc, availability of pantry cars and journey period of train etc.

(e): In its endeavour to provide quality and hygienic food at affordable rate to the passengers, Railways have developed and operationalized an institutionalized mechanism for monitoring of quality and hygiene of catering services through regular inspections at various levels to address catering complaints. Penal action is taken against the licensee depending upon the gravity of offense which inter-alia includes imposition of hefty fines, termination of contract etc. With the objective to provide quality food to rail passengers, new Catering Policy 2017 has been issued on 27.02.2017 wherein Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC) has been mandated to carry out the unbundling by creating a distinction primarily between food preparation and food distribution. The new catering policy, inter-alia, includes the following features which would help in mitigating passenger complaints related to overcharging and quality of food (i) IRCTC shall manage catering services on all mobile units. (ii) Meals for all mobile units will be picked up from the nominated kitchens owned, operated and managed by IRCTC. (iii) IRCTC will engage service providers for hospitality industry for service of food in trains. (iv) IRCTC shall not outrightly outsource or issue licenses for provision of catering services to private licensees.
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